

# Highlights of notes on The 2001 Human Capital Summit on Recruitment and Retention For Government Agencies July 19 – 20, 2001

by Boni Bigornia,  
Recruitment Task Force  
(415) 977-8102

## General Accounting Office:

- There are already a lot of existing tools out there under the current laws (e.g., casual dress, employee suggestion box, telecommuting, awards, etc.)

## Forest Service:

- The Forest Service has 13 field liaisons just for recruitment;
  - o They have 30 permanent and 14 temp positions devoted to recruitment;
  - o They have a workforce plan and a five-year recruiting strategy (we've asked for copies); in the past, their workforce planning didn't link with strategy and budget and there was no recruiting coordination; inefficient searches; not regional
- It is **imperative to get management support** and continue to remind them of the importance of recruiting
- At Forest Service, they asked for \$4.5 million, and got 0.5 million, still up from the 50,000 that they had been budgeting. Now **their budget is \$2million.**
- **They hired a professional website designer, and incorporated a recruiter training course of two 3-day sessions per year (2 days are handled by a professional firm, the National Associates of Colleges and Employees).**
- **They had a professional video show and CD produced and made 5,000 copies of each. These are distributed to schools.**
- They (and we) need to realize that we are not the best ones to do these marketing and development initiatives, and need to hire professionals.

- They too, have developed a Toolkit for Recruiters in the field.

## Internal Revenue Service:

- They **do not put IRS on their business cards**, they use Department of the Treasury ... because IRS may turn some people off.
- They sell their jobs by calling the training “a Masters Degree in Taxation” and realize that selling a 4-year training program is a great way to attract people. Maybe a lot will leave for the Big Six accounting/consulting firms, but some will stay.
- They spent 2 years developing computer programs to do strategic planning, allowing the identifying of gaps in the demographic makeup of the agency, and allowing the targeting of filling those gaps.
- They hired a consultant who **held 25 blind focus groups at campuses**.
- **They recognized that recruiters have to look like the people on campus.**
- **Alumni ties/recruiters were found to be very important in success rates.**
- They did not go to Ivy League schools – unlikely recruits
- **Management was required to partner with schools as Campus Executives in order to build relationships.**
- A Madison Avenue-type advertising firm was hired to set up a desirable image. They hire students in Accounting, Business, and Law Enforcement. The tax collection business is not very “sexy” so they sold it creatively.
- Example 1: They showed a picture of the planet Mars and space travel and the slogan read: “We pay for this!” That slogan showed recruits the importance of their job at the IRS.
- Example 2: To show the law enforcement component (decision made not to show guns), they showed a person’s hands handcuffed behind their back with the slogan: “Help us Plan Extended Vacations”
- An interesting point found from the focus groups was that **Flags and Patriotism does not sell**. The new generation is not interested in that. When presented with the Kennedy quote “Ask not what your country can do for you...”, some responded: “Which Kennedy?”
- Psychologists designed 24 interview questions to analyze behavior of applicants.

## Former President Bush Aid:

- OMB asked each agency what they have in the way of strategic recruitment and workforce planning because President Bush has a delayering goal to eliminate 40,000 middle-management positions. The speaker suggested that employee focus groups be developed to help strategic planning. Plans need to look at external factors that affect the mission. (e.g., for the Public Health Service, how will AIDS and Welfare affect the mission in 5 years).
- Outsourcing targets are 5% this year and 10% in FY 03. Agencies need to define and defend their jobs that are deemed Commercial Activities (CA) versus Inherently Governmental.
- The speaker noted that there are very few Leadership Development Programs in the federal government.

## Social Security Administration:

- Super SSA benefits ideas were presented.
- **Every Employee has a mentor.**
- People are told that they can use the Internet and Phones for their personal use (they will anyways), and if they are found using a payphone, they will be punished.
- They **have childcare centers** where employees are encouraged to visit their kids during lunch breaks.
- They **encourage bringing kids to work on special days.**
- Benefits are the same everywhere in the nation, not up to the discretion of regional offices. This is a required level playing field in their eyes.
- Lunchtime entertainment is offered up and encouraged (talents of staff are highlighted and brought out). Community outreach is encouraged.
- **Up to 37% of salary is available to give as awards (?) and they use all of it.**
- **Their advertising contract does the creative part and artwork and advertising for large papers for free and subsidizes advertising in specialized journals... they haggle to work out a deal.**

## Office of Personnel Management:

- **Some college campuses do not allow people wearing suits at their job fairs.**
- Student recruits demand FUN, and if your agency can't offer it, they can go somewhere else. A Verizon job fair was held in a Pool Hall at 2 am ... and was well attended.
- 87% of new hires were referrals. Use Referral Bonuses
- **Student Loan repayments are a good flexibility to use.**
- **We know we are hiring auditors but make it look like we're not. Make the job look "cool and sexy"**

## Treasury Department:

- **Offer Shadow days to help mentor new employees**
- In the IT community, they offer **salary bonuses for different classes taken** such as:
  - o 5% for basic Microsoft, Lotus, Cisco, A+
  - o 10% for BSc, technician certificate
  - o 15% for Masters, MS, CCP, CCIE, CIO certificate, Oracle DBA
- Success indicators used were: reduced attrition, certification growth, improved moral, improved customer support.
- **If they had a person for 3-5 years, they got their money's worth. They threw out any illusions of a career employee.**

## OPM:

- USAJOBS.com allows free banner ads
- Critical jobs can be posted in What's Hot section of the website
- Studenthire.com is a link that offers info to students still in school.